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Lincoln Room

SPEECH

OF

MR. PROFFIT, OF INDIANA,

ON

THE GENERAL APPROPRIATION BILL.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

APRIL 27, 1840.

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WASHINGTON :

PRINTED BY GALES AND SEATON.

1840.





## SPEECH.

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Mr. Chairman: It is now, I believe, about four weeks since the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole upon this bill; and during all that time, day after day, and night after night, I have been a silent but attentive looker on in this unrivalled scene of contention. The first two days of the discussion convinced me, sir, that we of the Opposition could propose no amendment, use no argument, which would in the slightest degree affect the determination of the majority to pass the bill in the form reported by the Committee of Ways and Means. It required no stretch of intellect to perceive that the order had gone forth to vote down every proposition of the minority; and, sir, up to this hour, that order has been most implicitly obeyed. It comports not with my taste to describe the tumult, the legislative depravity, the utter recklessness, which I have here witnessed. It has been but a continuation of the disgraceful scene with which our sitting opened; and it is now lamentably palpable that a Congress which commenced in revolution, riot, and anarchy, must terminate in disorder and disgrace. Nothing beneficial to the people need be expected; for this Hall, which was intended for deliberation, for discussion, for legislative action, is converted into a mere arena for the display of the gladiatorial feeling of party. With every feeling of my heart, I respond to the language of my honorable friend from Virginia, (Mr. BOTTS,) when, on a former occasion, he said, "I wish to God, from my very heart and soul, that our constituents, especially such of them as are friendly to this Administration, were thronging our galleries." Yes, sir, they would soon see who it is that has caused Congress to become a by-word and a reproach. Who, sir, is accountable for these scenes and for this delay of the public business? Who, sir, is chargeable with introducing and suffering this unparliamentary and unprofitable discussion? Sir, the countenances of the prominent Administration members give the reluctant answer. They know that they commenced and prosecuted this partisan debate. They cannot deny that they encouraged it. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. DUNCAN) knows that he commenced it. If I do him injustice by this accusation, he or any of his friends may correct me. No, sir, it cannot be denied. Without the slightest provocation, and without one word having been said by the Opposition on the subject, he, for one whole day, violently assailed the character of General Harrison; exhibited caricatures—vile filthy daubs, manufactured by his own party for political effect; disgusted and fatigued us with the execrable rhymes of some wretched "ballad-monger;" read scraps from outcast newspapers, which until now were rotting in the oblivion to which they were long since consigned by the universal consent of all decent men. Sir, for days the friends of the Administration inflicted upon us the same stale, stereotyped speeches, which have served their purposes, in every need, for the last few years. The "anti-bank," "anti-monopoly," "anti-associated-wealth" speech was *recited* by the gentleman from Ohio, (Mr. WELLES;) and I mean no disrespect to the gentleman when I say that I have unhappily been compelled to listen to that speech upon at least one hundred different occasions. I hope, most sincerely hope, that I have heard it for the last time. The gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. PARMENTER) broached another favorite theme of the Administration, making known his horror of the Hartford Convention; and on this interminable topic, tested for hours the patience of the committee. The gentleman from New Hampshire, (Mr. ARNERTON,) who so frequently professes to abhor irrelevancy in debate, occupied, for hours, the attention of such as could listen, by reading from sundry British essays, pamphlets, and reviews, &c.; among which I recollect *Blackwood's Magazine* occupied a very conspicuous place; and, not content with hours thus wasted, the gentleman must have the benefit of an adjournment, in spite of the remonstrances of myself and others; and, on the next day, with refreshed energy and renewed vigor, continued to inflict upon us the punishment of listening to his dull, unmeaning, and irrelevant quotations. The honorable gentleman from Maine, (Mr. CLIFFORD,) despite the agony depicted on every countenance around him, unfeelingly introduced another subject, on which all Administration men are eloquent—"The History of the Federal and Democratic Parties;" and hour after hour was consumed in reading from and descanting on all the partisan writers of the first thirty years of our Government. Sir, against this waste of time I must distinctly protest, because the party in power published some years since a pamphlet under this title. It was compiled under the supervision of its choice spirits, and was sown broadcast and gratuitously over the whole land, particularly in the West. I have a copy of it now before me. I therefore think this new edition by the



gentleman from Maine quite unnecessary, especially as it is much inferior to the first; and, sir, I would, with due deference, suggest to gentlemen that, if they wish to recommend themselves to Executive favor, by becoming partisan authors and pamphlet scribblers, would it not be better that they should betake themselves to the closet, and in that retirement scrawl to their heart's content? Thousands of dollars could be thus saved to the people, and yet the public receive the benefit of their vast knowledge and *literary* gleanings. But, sir, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. JAMESON) outstripped all his compeers in the ingenuity of his cruelty; for, in spite of all entreaty and all remonstrance, he caused to be read to us one whole newspaper and parts of several others. The "Nashville Union" was, I believe, the name of the paper which he gravely informed us he should adopt as a part of his speech. To this, sir, I have no objection. Gentlemen may adopt any bantling they please. I care not what its color or its origin; but I do wish that some rule could be devised, whereby gentlemen could be permitted to give us these pamphlets, and reviews, and newspapers, and old songs, *by the title*. Then, sir, a bill providing for the civil and diplomatic expenses of the Government, might be discussed and disposed of in somewhat less time than forty days and nights, and some exhibitions might be avoided, which, to say the least of them, reflect any thing but credit upon us as legislators. I could proceed, sir, to name many other gentlemen of the Administration party who occupied day after day without one moment's reference to the subject before the committee. I could prove, beyond the possibility of denial, that a very large portion of the misspent time of which the people are justly complaining, was occupied by the declaimers of the Administration party. Yet, sir, the organ of that party, with unparalleled effrontery, accuses the Opposition of procrastination, of wasting time unnecessarily, and its petty satellites throughout the Union echo the baseless charge, notwithstanding the facts which I have here stated stand uncontroverted by any gentleman on this floor.

There is, Mr. Chairman, one gentleman of the Administration party who participated largely in this debate, who is not obnoxious to the charge I have made: it is the honorable chairman of the Ways and Means, (Mr. JONES.) I must, in justice to that gentleman, say, that he attempted to curb and repress the reckless spirits with whom he is unfortunately associated. But dignity and common sense, and courtesy of manners, have but little influence with them; and, therefore, his counsels and his example passed unheeded. I, sir, well understand the object of those who have polluted this atmosphere with their ribaldry and misrepresentations. They think that they are working wonders in their daily labor of manufacturing political capital for the Presidential election. They suppose that the people will implicitly believe any slander they may utter. They imagine that, under the imposing title of a Congressional name, any absurdity will pass current in the country; and this, sir, is the manner in which they carry on their machinations.

A base falsehood is manufactured at the fountainhead. It is then inserted in some contemptible newspaper in an obscure corner of the country, or blazoned forth in staring characters in the "Official organ," as the occasion may demand. It then takes the rounds of the Administration journals, with such comments as suit the political atmosphere in which it appears. If it succeeds in poisoning the public mind, the object is accomplished, and the party rejoice and are satisfied with the result of their labors. But if the good sense of the people, distrustful of the base source from which it emanates, should hesitate to receive the falsehood—if, in anxious inquiry after truth, the honest yeomanry of the nation demand proof of the charge preferred, or assertion made, and the slander receives but a momentary check, then, sir, the eye of the Administration is cast upon Congress, and some supple tool is selected to become the "*Congressional endorser*." Then, sir, in the shape of a speech made upon this floor, and with increased malignity, and improved venom, it is poured forth to the world. And from what I have witnessed, there certainly is much competition for the honor of serving as the *sewer* of the party, through which all the filth of the Administration shall pass into this Hall, and from this to the country. Upon this occasion I will say, that more than one of the organs selected have shown themselves to be of fitting material, not to be the *sewer* only, but the *reservoir* of all the pestilential misrepresentations of the Administration.

I cannot notice what different gentlemen have said. I had not intended to have opened my lips during this debate; but after what has fallen from the gentlemen from Ohio (Mr. DUNCAN) and from Virginia, (Mr. HOPKINS,) I should consider myself as remiss in duty did I not say a few words in reply. The first of these gentlemen is the acknowledged idol of the party and the especial object of their reverence. The latter, not less beloved, because more recently installed as a priest in their political temple. Both have figured conspicuously on this occasion, and have succeeded in throwing into the shade all other aspirants to the title of party leaders. Of the speech of the gentleman from Ohio I will say but little. All that part of it impeaching the civil and military character of General Harrison is but a compilation of the slanders which have appeared again and again in the Administration prints, and have so often been refuted that further notice of them might possibly raise their authors "to the dignity of a decent man's contempt." I have no wish to give them even that importance, but shall content myself with replying to the attacks made upon General Harrison by the gentleman from Virginia, both in his speech and in his letter to



Colonel Piper, which, having been published in pamphlet form, and alluded to on this floor, is legitimately a subject for criticism.

I perceive, Mr. Chairman, that the last Globe contains the speech of the gentleman from Ohio, and that, in recommending the speech to the public, its editor says, "it has a spice of coarseness suited to the Western people." I presume, sir, that our people of the West will fully appreciate the *compliment* paid to their taste. I, sir, have yet to learn that our people are less intelligent, or less observant of the decencies and proprieties of life, than the people of other portions of the Union; and I have greatly mistaken their character if any respectable man of any party will countenance and approve any such vile garbage as is contained in this specimen of *coarseness* issued to suit the taste of the West. Could I overcome my repugnance to read such ribaldry, I would give the committee some "beautiful extracts" from this speech; but I should then be compelled to pollute my printed remarks with their insertion, and, therefore, I forbear. At the suggestion of a gentleman immediately before me, I will, however, read one extract, assuring the committee that I mean no contempt by its introduction:

"Mary Rogers are a case,  
And so are Sally Thompson,  
General Jackson are a horse,  
And so are Colonel Johnson."

This, sir, is a specimen of Congressional speech making, and if it is not *coarse* enough to suit the taste of the most vulgar, the gentleman will, doubtless, upon another trial, improve both his style and his rhymes. With the aid of other kindred spirits, he will, doubtless in his next effort, favor us with something still more disgusting and foolish.

I, Mr. Chairman, as a Western man, have watched with something both of sorrow and of anger, the continued insults which have been offered to the West, since General Harrison became a candidate. No sooner was his name announced, than we were sneeringly told that he was but a "*paltry Log Cabin Candidate*;" as though a residence in an humble dwelling constituted a crime, or at least a disqualification for office. Another writer of the Administration, defending this scornful allusion to the people of the West, speaks of the tenants of the Log Cabins as "*having souls suited to the dirt hovels in which they live*." And now, sir, the most loathsome trash is published under the name of a speech, and it is said by the official organ that its *coarseness* will suit the Western people.

Sir, I know the people who are the objects of this continued abuse. I know full well the answer they will give to these pampered menials of power. They await impatiently the coming of November next; and then, sir, with one simultaneous thunder-shout of indignation, will they pronounce the death doom of the Administration which, not content with injuring, has dared to insult them.

And now, sir, I will turn my attention to the gentleman from Virginia, (Mr. HOPKINS,) and although I could wish to follow him closely, and examine his position minutely, this, sir, is impossible, both from the lateness of the hour, and from the multiplicity of subjects introduced by the gentleman, doubtless to evade the true issue now pending. But, sir, as I had anticipated, the currency question was the principal theme of his discourse; and all the distress and ruin now universal through the country, is attributed to the banks. This is always the cry—over-issues; contraction and expansion; excessive imports; small exports; heartless corporations; combined wealth. These never varying and never failing catch-phrases the gentleman uses in profusion, both in his speech and in his letter to Col. Piper. In the latter, I find it again and again repeated. Page 4, I find he speaks of the influence of the banks, and of the "whole dynasty of *associated wealth*." Page 9, he is again opposed to the whole "*dynasty of associated wealth*." Page 10, he speaks of a "*powerful combination* of bodies, artificial," &c. Again, the banks "*combine* against the Administration." And again, he tells of "*combined encroachments*." And, page 11, "*incorporated wealth never cloy*s." Mr. Chairman, we all understand for what purpose these changes are rung. I am inclined to think, sir, that the people of this country understand that it is an attempt to enlist their prejudices rather than their judgments. And further, sir, I think the gentleman underrates their common sense, by supposing that he can, by this ruse, prevent them from examining into the causes of their present troubles. The gentleman says that there have been over-issues by the banks; over-trading by the people, &c. I, sir, have not time to investigate this matter closely; but it has been examined repeatedly, both in this and the last Congress, and proved beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the destruction of the Bank of the United States, and the after policy of the Administration, caused those over-issues of which the gentleman complains. The very state of things now existing, was predicted by the Opposition previous to its destruction. We were told, sir, by the friends of the then existing Administration, that the State corporations would furnish a *better* currency; that money would be more plentiful; and that money was to be all gold or silver—no bank paper. But no sooner was the bill rechartering the Bank of the United States vetoed, and the deposits removed from its care, than we had message after message lauding the State banks. In 1834, the President proclaimed to Congress that "the State banks are found fully adequate to the performance of all services which were required of the Bank of the United States, quite as promptly, and with the same



cheapness." In 1835, the President in his message again assures Congress that the State banks *continued* to realize every expectation entertained of their capacity to serve the purposes of Government. In 1836, the President again told Congress that the State banks still performed all the duties required of them. Every Administration paper in the Union echoed their praise. The Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Taney, urged upon the several deposit banks to *increase* their discounts, and gave as a reason, that "the *deposits of the public money* will enable you to afford increased facilities." Banks were selected as public depositories, merely on account of the party bias of those who controlled their affairs, as will appear by the published correspondence of certain institutions in New York, and other parts of the Union. According to the recommendation of the Secretary of the Treasury, they did extend their issues, and speculation—unprecedented expansion, became the result. Then came the specie circular; and the very crisis which the Opposition had always predicted, fell with appalling force upon us; and ever since that time, the country, like a drunken man, has been reeling to and fro under the influence of the noxious draught administered by the political empirics of that day. This, sir, is a brief sketch of the causes of the over-issues to which are attributed the present embarrassments of the country. But, sir, if mismanagement of banks, and over-issues, are to be alluded to in a party point of view, I would turn the attention of the gentleman to those States where the Administration party had the control. I will instance Mississippi, Alabama, &c. Those States, sir, are edifying specimens of Administration financiering. It is useless, sir, to attempt to satisfy the people any longer with fine spun theories, or specious promises. It is in vain to ask them to submit to any more *experiments*. They are determined to have a change in the Administration. They can recollect that but a few years since they *had* a sound currency, good markets, and constant employment for their industry. They know that there has been mismanagement *somewhere*. Their present condition cannot be rendered more distressing. Any change must be for the better, and therefore a change they will have. This, sir, is the language of common sense, as now coming from the mass of the people.

But, sir, I perceive that the Administration party here affect to sneer, as usual, at the assertion made by myself and others, that general distress pervades the country. I know, sir, that gentlemen have said that it is but imaginary. One gentleman, (Mr. DUNCAN,) in his speech, has told us that, if the people are embarrassed, he would advise them "to take off their coats, and go to work." This language, sir, may suit an Administration rolling in wealth and splendor. It may come with fitting grace from the supporters of men who are receiving large salaries in gold and silver, and actually *profiting* by the derangement of the currency. But I tell you, sir, that the people will know how to appreciate and to answer such unfeeling, heartless, cold-blooded, and insolent language. They have had their coats off; they have labored; they have vainly used every effort to obtain the due reward of that labor; and now the products of the agricultural community are still remaining unsold, or, if disposed of, it has been at a ruinous sacrifice. And even now the farmer is sowing and planting without hope of remuneration. He knows not whether the sweat-drops of a long summer's labor will avail him aught. In the present derangement of all business operations, the calculations even of the most sagacious fail; and yet gentlemen, as an answer to the every day's experience of these truths, return the old answer, that the Administration is not responsible, and attribute it all to the banks. Sir, the Administration is responsible. It is its exploded and exploding *experiments* which have occasioned this state of things. Its tamperings; its reckless disregard for every interest; its determination to sustain itself in power at every hazard; its execrable attempts to check the enterprise, and assimilate the condition of the American people to that of the monarchies of Europe. Sir, one week's *derangement* of the active industry of this country is a greater loss to the country than if you were to throw the whole capital of the Bank of the United States into the Delaware. This, sir, is undeniable, and yet we have had not only weeks, but years, of constant derangement, and the consequences are now hanging darkly as a pall upon the country.

But, sir, as the gentleman from Virginia is so loud in his denunciation of the banks, and *now* thinks that the public money ought by no means to be placed in their keeping, I will read a passage from the report of the majority of the Investigating Committee, of which the gentleman was a member, and with which majority he acted. After stating that the loss to the Government of large sums of money might have been avoided by depositing in the banks, on *special deposit*, and citing the Bank of America and the Manhattan Bank as having been used as depositories after they *suspended specie payments*, the committee, on page 72, say:

"It is, then, apparent that, *had the depositing system of banks* been continued, Mr. Swartwout could not have had money, beyond the collections of a single week, exceeding the current expenses of his office, to have retained on going out of office: and the evidence of his not having diverted any previous to that time, and that all previous collections were in bank, would have been regularly derived from the banks, as well as in Mr. Swartwout's official returns."

I shall have occasion, sir, to refer to this report again; but, in the meantime, I must remark that the gentleman's opinions have certainly undergone a great change since the last session of Congress. It is useless for the gentleman to give as an excuse, that the banks have now suspended; for the report finds fault because the deposits were not made, even after they had suspended.



But, sir, it is not my purpose to defend the banks. I am in nowise identified with them; but the gentleman having thought fit to accuse the Opposition of shifting ground, and acting inconsistently, I deem it my duty to deny the assertion, to investigate his course, and to ascertain whether he is not liable to the very charge he has so unreservedly made against us.

I would, Mr. Chairman, call the attention of the committee to the systematic deception which is now practising upon the people of the United States, on the subject of the promised reforms in the currency. The Administration leaders have now at least some half a dozen various schemes on which they are attempting to coin political capital. The Senator from Missouri (Mr. BENTON) is opposed to the issuing of any bank paper in bills under the denomination of one hundred dollars. The Senator from South Carolina (Mr. CALHOUN) is out against all bank paper, and must have nothing but gold and silver. A Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. BUCHANAN) says that he is in favor of a *mixed* currency, but asks the Legislatures of the States to confer power on Congress to prohibit the issue of any notes under twenty dollars. Another Administration partisan in this House (Mr. MONTGOMERY) proposes to issue *ten dollar Treasury notes* as currency, and this without one single dollar of specie basis. Look also, sir, at the action of the Legislatures under Administration control—Pennsylvania, for instance. The Legislature meets, (the Van Buren party having a large majority,) breathing vengeance against the banks; nothing will appease their wrath but immediate resumption or instant destruction. They meet, wrangle, scold, vow that banks are nuisances, and bank paper worthless rags; and terminate the session by borrowing some millions of bank paper, and allowing the banks their own time to resume specie payment. They then go home and hold “*indignation meetings*,” and denounce one another as having acted traitorously to the party. And when, sir, I, as a stranger to Pennsylvania tactics, have asked some explanation of these seeming inconsistencies, I have been told, Oh, never mind us; we will arrange it all; we understand the people of Pennsylvania.

I will now take notice of the complaint made by the gentleman that the Opposition deal unfairly with the Administration, in giving to the public partial extracts from official documents. This charge, sir, is unfounded; is unsupported by any proof; and I defy any gentleman to make good the accusation. I deprecate as much as any gentleman can, any such unfairness; and I consider any man who would knowingly mislead the public mind, a fit object of scorn and contempt. I will read, sir, the document which has given the Administration party so much uneasiness.

(OFFICIAL.)—PUBLIC EXPENDITURE FROM 1824 TO 1833.

*Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting a statement of expenditure, exclusive of the public debt, for each year, from 1824 to 1833.*

(JUNE 23, 1838.—Read, and laid upon the table.)

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, June 27, 1838.

SIR: In obedience to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 25th instant, I have the honor to “lay before the House a statement showing the amount of expenditure, *exclusive of the public debt*, for each year, from 1824 to 1833.”

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LEVI WOODBURY, *Secretary of the Treasury.*

Hon. J. K. POLK, *Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

*Statement showing the amount of expenditures of the United States, exclusive of the public debt, for each year, from 1824 to 1837, inclusive, stated in pursuance of a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 25th June, 1838.*

For the year 1824 -	-	-	-	\$15,330,144 71	For the year 1831 -	-	-	-	\$13,864,067 90
Do 1825 -	-	-	-	11,490,459 94	Do 1832 -	-	-	-	16,516,388 77
Do 1826 -	-	-	-	13,062,316 27	Do 1833 -	-	-	-	22,713,755 11
Do 1827 -	-	-	-	12,653,095 65	Do 1834 -	-	-	-	18,425,417 25
Do 1828 -	-	-	-	12,396,041 45	Do 1835 -	-	-	-	17,514,950 28
Do 1829 -	-	-	-	12,660,460 62	Do 1836 -	-	-	-	30,368,164 04
Do 1830 -	-	-	-	13,229,533 33	Do 1837 -	-	-	-	*39,164,745 37

\*NOTE.—The foregoing sums include payments for trust funds and indemnities, which, in 1837, was \$5,610,404 36

T. L. SMITH, *Register.*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *Register's Office*, June 27, 1838.

Is there a gentleman on this floor who will rise in his place and say that this is not a full and complete document, as sent to Congress by the Secretary of the Treasury? Is there a word or figure missing? Is there a syllable added? No, sir; it is the whole of an official report. What does it prove? That the expenditures of this Government, despite all the professions of economy, despite all the promises of retrenchment, have increased from \$15,330,144 71 in 1824, to \$39,164,745 37 in 1837, nearly threefold; and when, sir, we present this document to the people and ask their judgment upon it, the Administration party complain of unfairness.

The gentleman from Virginia, with much ingenuity, attempts to evade this plain demonstration of facts and figures, by explaining the *causes* which have led to this vast increase of the expenditures by the Administration. This, sir, he has a perfect right to do; and I, sir, have also a right to answer his explanations, and to show that, notwithstanding his ingenuity and tact at mystifying this subject, this Administration is responsible—justly censurable—for permitting and countenancing waste, extravagance, and peculation.



Amongst other things, the gentleman from Virginia quotes the Florida war as an item of "extraordinary expenses," and says that many of the Opposition voted supplies. I have not examined the journal, neither shall I; for I consider it as quite immaterial who and what party voted for or against the appropriations. It is enough for me to know that a war with the Indians existed in Florida, and that the Government made estimates, and demanded supplies. They were granted; and the Administration is responsible for the manner of the expenditure. But, sir, this is another instance of the *fairness* with which the Opposition are treated. If they vote supplies, they are accused of extravagance, and the President protests that *he* is not responsible. Had they refused to vote the money demanded by the Government, a want of patriotism would have been ascribed to them, and they would have been branded as enemies of the country. But, Mr. Chairman, I will proceed to prove that the money appropriated by Congress for the prosecution of this war has been most shamefully wasted; and I will cite a few instances of the lavish extravagance which I charge upon the Administration. In Senate Document, 2d session 25th Congress, vol. 3, I find "a statement of contracts for fuel, transportation, &c., for the Quartermaster's department for 1837," and signed "T. Cross, Acting Quartermaster General." Here, sir, I find, in part, how the *thirty millions* have been expended in Florida. I will give the committee a few items of *steamboat* contracts for 1837:

For charter of steamboat	Watchman	-	-	\$450 per day, or	\$164,250 per annum.	
Do.	do.	Mobile	-	465	do.	169,725 do.
Do.	do.	Anna Calhoun, and 2 barges	-	400	do.	146,000 do.
Do.	do.	Henry Cromwell	-	300	do.	109,500 do.
Do.	do.	Hyperion	-	300	do.	109,500 do.
Do.	do.	Leflore	-	200	do.	73,000 do.
Do.	do.	Charleston	-	3,750 per month, or	45,000	do.
Do.	do.	Florida	-	3,000	do.	36,000 do.
Do.	do.	John McLean	-	4,000	do.	48,000 do.
Do.	do.	Camden	-	4,000	do.	48,000 do.
Do.	do.	James Adams	-	4,000	do.	48,000 do.
Do.	do.	Altamaha	-	5,000	do.	60,000 do.
Do.	do.	—————	-	3,500	do.	40,000 do.

In short, sir, by this document it appears that there were CHARTERED, during the year 1837, thirty-five steamboats, forty-three schooners, two sloops, twenty-five brigs, six ships; making, in all, *one hundred and eleven vessels* chartered, during the year 1837, for the prosecution of this Florida war—this war, sir, which we, a nation of millions, have waged for years with some 500 naked warriors. And, besides the one hundred and eleven vessels chartered, I find upwards of one hundred contracts, some of them of a very large amount, for *transportation* of troops, forage, arms, horses, &c., during that year, for this war. Sir, the party in power is justly chargeable with having involved the country in this war unnecessarily, and then of having wasted the money appropriated for its prosecution.

I will give also another charge from the same document: "For *transporting* 100 cords of fire-wood from New Orleans to Fort Brooke, East Florida, and one assistant surgeon, \$2,000." Here, sir, is charged *twenty dollars* per cord for *carrying* fire-wood from New Orleans, besides the original cost and other expenses; and that, too, to a country where, as I am assured by gentlemen well acquainted with the country, thousands of cords of wood could be cut in sight of the fort to which this wood was sent. I am also informed that wood has often been taken from Florida to New Orleans for sale; and I should not be surprised if this wood was originally from Florida, and, after being shipped to New Orleans and properly seasoned, was shipped back again to afford a little patronage. These, sir, are a few specimens of expenditure in the Florida war for 1837. I could for hours read charges equally obnoxious to censure; and, sir, I have had a resolution on your table ever since the first resolution day of this session asking the Secretary of War for a detailed account of the expenditures of the war, and the friends of the Administration, by some miserable subterfuge or quibbling point of order, refuse to call for the statement. And yet, sir, this is called a representative Government; and we assume to be the Grand Inquest of the nation, and the people are told that all officers, from the President down, are strictly accountable. Yet we cannot ask how \$30,000,000 of their money has been spent without being told by gentlemen that the Opposition voted supplies for the war, and that these expenditures are "extraordinary." Truly, sir, they are "*extraordinary*;" and therefore it is that I demand a full and explicit statement as to their nature.

I am told, sir, that a steamboat was offered to the Government for about \$14,000, and, refusing to purchase, they chartered her until they paid some \$72,000. I am told, sir, that plank in several instances has cost \$1 25 per foot, or \$125 per hundred feet. Also, that fire wood has cost \$50 per cord. Sir, it is the duty of the Administration party to give the people light on this subject, and to relieve themselves, if they can, from the charges of waste and peculation.

I believe the charges to be true, from what I have seen of the documents now before me, and this is but the account for one year. I should, amongst other things, like to see what amount



has been expended for the "bloodhounds," which, as every person now acknowledges, have turned out to be common curs, and not worth a shilling a head. I presume that this *experiment*, with the *contingencies*, cost some thousands. I perceive, also, that one man has been paid \$7 50 per day, and subsistence, for transporting *forty* bushels of corn, in sacks, from one post to another in Wisconsin. Flour has been transported from one place to another until it cost \$50 per barrel, and then sold at one-fourth of the cost of transportation. In short, sir, did I not see these things stated in official documents, I could not have believed it possible that such gross mismanagement existed. But I must leave this branch of expenditure, thus hastily glanced at, and pass to another.

The gentleman from Virginia, in his anxiety to defend his new allies, quotes the expenses "of Indian emigration, and subsistence for Indians," as an item of expenditure for which many of the Opposition voted, and the gentleman classes it under the head of "extraordinary expenses." I shall not deny that many Opposition members did vote for the estimates demanded by the Administration for this branch of the public service. I think they were quite justifiable in so doing. But, sir, could any one of the Opposition have ever supposed that the money voted would have been so shamefully squandered, absolutely wasted, as the reports of the officers in that department prove it to have been. I will cite one or two instances, out of the many I could enumerate, to prove the unjustifiable and criminal abuses which have been practised on this subject.

Document No. 127, of 3d session of 25th Congress, is a letter of Mr. Poinsett, Secretary of War. In that document I find a communication from the Commissary General of Subsistence, addressed to Mr. Poinsett, and I there perceive that the Government, after purchasing unnecessarily a vast amount of provisions, &c., "for the army, sent it to the Cherokee country," and, having no use for it, ordered it to be sold, and I will quote an extract from that communication :

"The supplies sold consisted of 50 barrels pork, 2,645 barrels flour, 821 barrels hard bread, 272½ bushels beans, 16½ bushels cornmeal, 169 bushels corn, 506 bushels salt, 75,027 pounds sugar, 41,297 pounds coffee, 5,458 pounds rice, 531,020 pounds bacon, 28,181 pounds soap, 14,110 pounds candles, 371 gallons whiskey, 5,145 gallons vinegar, and all the issuing apparatus, such as scales, weights, and measures, used while the volunteer troops were in service. These articles produced the nett sum of \$52,117 90."

This, sir, is the "*official account*." Does any gentleman here deny it? Is there any one of the Administration party who wishes to give an explanation? if so, I will give way. Not one, sir. Then, let none of the Administration papers throughout the Union dare to deny this statement. And what do I prove by this, Mr. Chairman? That this vast amount of supplies, "*collected unnecessarily*," cost, as will appear by the accounts of the Department, upwards of *two hundred and sixty thousand dollars*, including transportation, commissions, buildings erected for their preservation, &c., and were sold by this all-wise and *competent* Administration for less than *one-fifth* of cost. This, sir, is the manner in which the money of the people is wasted. I will ask the gentleman from Virginia if it was possible for any honest man to anticipate such unjustifiable squanderings of the public money? It seems, sir, that the 28,181 pounds of soap were not needed by the army. It ought never to have been sold, sir. It should have been shipped to Washington, and would have served as a fraction of the quantity requisite to cleanse this foul Administration. But, sir, I will give you another item of sales of stores, &c., purchased unnecessarily, and sold at auction in the Cherokee country, in 1838, and embraced in this same communication. I find, sir, that corn, which cost the Government at least *one dollar and a half*, and in many instances two dollars, *per bushel*, and accumulated unnecessarily in vast quantities, was sold by this *economical* Administration as follows :

8,381 bushels corn, at 17½ cents per bushel	400 bushels corn, at 3¾ cents per bushel.
5,275 do. at 11½ do.	4,239½ do. at 12¾ do.
4,990¾ do. at 10¼ do.	

This, sir is a specimen of the prices at which this article was sold, and thousands of dollars thrown away in this one article of corn alone. And this, sir, is only a fraction of the quantity sold. I find, further, sir, that oats, purchased at double the usual cost, were sold at 3½ cents per bushel. This corn and oats were not damaged; for the report states them to have been sound, and the damaged corn sold separately. I could proceed, sir, to enumerate hundreds of cases of the same nature, but time will not permit. I will close by giving an extract from a letter of the Creek agent at Fort Gibson, addressed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, complaining of the action of the Administration, in forwarding such immense quantities of supplies unnecessarily to that post, and which also had to be sold at an immense sacrifice :

"But, whatever be the apology of the measure in question, whether it be ignorance of the resources of the country, distrust of the capability of the officers charged with the subsistence of the Indians, or a dread of a failure of their efforts in that respect, one thing is demonstrably true, *that the great loss which is now inevitably consequent upon the measure, might have been avoided had timely directions been given to dispose of this extraordinary supply of provision as soon as it was ascertained not to be needed.*"

He again says :

"Instead of this, *cargo after cargo* continued to arrive as *the necessity decreased.*"

Again, sir, the same agent says :

"I repeat, sir, fearless of contradiction, had the agents here been instructed, in the first instance, as agents of the Government ought to have been, where its interest was concerned, the public would not have sustained the loss of



a single dollar ; the provision purchased in New Orleans would have been sold, and not transported here, as has been the case, at an *enormous* expense, *where it was not needed*, and at an additional expense of several thousands to erect suitable buildings to cover it from the weather."

This gentleman, sir, for his plain speaking to the Government officers, was treated with official insolence, and immediately resigned his station. A mean, obsequious, fawning sycophant would have been cherished and patronized by them. Here, sir, is another instance of hundreds of thousands of dollars squandered. Who could have dreamed of such "blundering policy?" And yet the gentleman from Virginia says the Opposition *voted* for "Indian subsistence," &c.; and he is loud in praise of an Administration which is thus, by its own official documents, convicted of incompetency, waste, and extravagance, and it may be something worse. I believe, sir, that all these unnecessary purchases were made to give profitable contracts to favorites.

We have been told, sir, that the public buildings are another source of "extraordinary" expense. I will, sir, for a moment refer to this matter, and in that moment, convince the committee, that another high-handed and unjustifiable act of this Administration has cost the people, unnecessarily, *three hundred thousand dollars*. I refer to the Post Office building. The Committee on Public Buildings of the House of Representatives, in order to ascertain the actual cost of the building proposed to be erected, made a demand for a detailed estimate of the cost of a *split granite* building. It was furnished; and amounted to two hundred and eighty thousand dollars. But, sir, no sooner had Congress adjourned, than the President ordered the erection of a *marble* building—a perfect palace, which is now estimated, even by Administration gentlemen, to cost *six hundred thousand dollars*. This, sir, will explain to gentlemen why this branch of expenditure is termed "extraordinary." But, sir, there is another matter connected with this subject, and which is admitted even here by the friends of the Administration. After the money appropriated by Congress had been expended, fearing that at its next meeting it might arrest the work, or demand an explanation of this enormously increased expenditure, the Executive actually allowed the work to progress *on credit* to the amount of \$65,000, and the laborers on the building, instead of receiving their pay regularly, were given checks or memoranda of the amount due them; and now, sir, we are called upon to vote money; and our *sympathies* are appealed to to pay the *laborers*. They shall be paid, sir; but I would demand to know by what authority of law was this work persevered in after the appropriation was expended? How dare the President and his coadjutors *ANTICIPATE* the action of Congress? How dare they usurp the power which legitimately belongs to the Representatives of the people? But, sir, my questions are answered by every day's experience. They dare do any thing. They dare violate all law; scoff at all precedent; commit any and every act, however unjustifiable and unlawful, and a drilled party majority will support and countenance their iniquities.

I could refer, also, to the Treasury building as another instance of the wasteful expenditure of public money. I could give repeated instances, in which money appropriated by Congress for one object has been transferred to another, without any authority of law; and when these exposures are made, the party acknowledge that investigation ought to be had, but that it is not convenient to make it at this particular time.

I will mention, Mr. Chairman, one other item of expenditure. Congress ordered a survey of the mouth of the Mississippi, and made an appropriation for improving the channel at the Balize. And how do you suppose, sir, that the money has been expended? One steamboat, one dredgeboat, and four schooners have been built or purchased, and fitted up in the most tasteful style. I find, sir, that there is charged for furniture in one of them, a mahogany sideboard, two *splendid card tables*, merino curtains, fine cane-seated settees, and other furniture to suit, *eight patent lever watches*, *one chronometer*, costing \$280, silver ware, and numerous other articles of the same description. All this, sir, is for common *mud-boats*. And after expending two hundred and ninety-one thousand dollars, the work is abandoned; and the mouth of the river is now in a worse condition than before the work was commenced. This, sir, is the expenditure at the *mouth* of the river. I know not how many snag-boats and mud-boats have been employed on Red river, or other rivers, or whether they are fitted out in the same style. But I do know, that when we ask a small appropriation on the Cumberland road, we are told by the Administration that there is no money in the Treasury; and that they are disposed to think that work *unconstitutional*.

There is another title, Mr. Chairman, under which the money of the people is squandered, if not actually purloined. It is under the head of "contingencies;" and the bill now before us gives a small specimen of the amount thus charged. In it alone, there is appropriated, under the title of contingencies, one hundred and twenty-seven thousand two hundred and thirty-five dollars, besides sixty-seven thousand dollars for miscellaneous, making together, one hundred and ninety-four thousand two hundred and thirty-five dollars. And when, sir, we ask how this large sum is expended, we are told that it is quite impossible *now* to give a detailed statement; but that, no doubt, it will be honestly accounted for. And if any of us insist on receiving the information, we are accused of wasting the time of the House, and of being altogether too inquisitive. Next year, sir, we shall have these sums accounted for in a bill for washing towels, horse hire, &c.



But, sir, it strikes me that gentlemen, in their zeal to defend the Administration, in more than one instance forget that "there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous." They talk quite feelingly indignant of the unfairness shown to the Administration in this matter of expenditure, and call it "crying injustice," and say that a large item is the three per cent. fund paid to the States. Now, sir, this is rather an amusing defence. Has not the three per cent. fund been paid to the States under every Administration? Is it not paid only in proportion to the amount of sales of the public lands within the different States? Is it not guaranteed to the States by the compact under which they became members of the Union? And have they not received it from the first day of their admission as States? Really, Mr. Chairman, these apologies are rather too shallow to deserve serious notice. But, sir, after all, the friends of the Administration are somewhat excusable for these attempts at subterfuge and evasion. They are sorely pressed by many searching inquiries. The stern gaze of the people is at last directed to their action, and they are compelled to avail themselves of any and every excuse, no matter how pitiable and unsatisfactory.

Sir, (said Mr. P.,) I have touched these different branches of expenditure but slightly; and I leave it with gentlemen better qualified to particularize abuses and unjustifiable expenditures. I will leave the subject by saying that, although the expenditures have increased nearly three-fold, I should not so loudly complain had the money been properly expended. But, sir, it has been wasted. Our fortifications were never in a worse condition. We have scarcely a ship of war fit for sea. When the frigate *United States* received some damage entering the port of New York, and was condemned as unseaworthy after an expenditure of some seventy thousand dollars, there was not a ship ready to receive her crew; and months passed before one could be fitted out to take the place of the condemned frigate. We have not a single *steamship* of war which deserves the name; I beg pardon, sir, I believe there is one—the "*Poinsett*"—they call her a steam-frigate; she is nothing but a miserable old scow. If I am rightly informed, she used to be employed somewhere about New York as a *ferry-boat*; was purchased at an enormous price by the Administration, fitted up, and has cost near one hundred thousand dollars. I am told that it took all hands (when serving in the Florida waters) two weeks to cut wood enough to run her three days. She is now lying at Norfolk, the perfect laughingstock of every sailor; but she is reported to Congress as a *steam-frigate*. Really, sir, it is a libel upon the name. In short, sir, the money voted by Congress within a few years past, for harbors, for light-houses, for breakwaters, for clearing out of rivers, has nearly all been wasted, foolishly thrown away, by the mismanagement and extravagance of the Administration. The searching question of the people is, "Where is our money?" The laconic answer is, Millions have been stolen; millions squandered; millions unaccounted for.

But the gentleman from Virginia, not content with glorifying the Administration, has thought it necessary to charge us with making unprovoked attacks upon the President and his friends, and, in a tone of triumph, has defied us to prove any act of malfeasance or misfeasance. Sir, I meet the challenge, and I will prove, from under the gentleman's *own signature*, charges made by him against the present Administration sufficient to blast the fair fame of any party. I shall refer, sir, to report No. 313 of House of Representatives, commonly called the report of the Investigating Committee on the defalcation of Swartwout and others. The gentleman from Virginia was a member of that committee, and although he did not sign the report with the majority, he made a special report to which he affixed his signature. I, sir, shall not at this time enter into an examination of the merits of the document. It is enough for me to know that the gentleman's name is signed to it. The following is the special report of the gentleman, and as he complains that it is unfair to give extracts, I will give it entire:

"*Mr. Hopkins's special concurrence in the report of the committee, appended thereto by vote of the committee.*

"I have not had the requisite time for scrutinizing the report of the committee with that care and attention which its length and importance deserve, and which I could have desired; and I should have preferred, for this reason, to have presented the journal of the committee, without comment, to the House of Representatives. But, as conflicting opinions prevail in the committee, and are to be submitted to the country in the shape of formal reports, I consider it my duty to say that I concur with the committee in all the conclusions at which they have arrived, so far as those conclusions apply to the extent and character of the defalcations of Samuel Swartwout and William M. Price.

"I should be faithless to my duty, and do violence to the most conscientious convictions of my judgment, if I did not also declare my entire concurrence in those conclusions of the committee which relate to the conduct of the late naval officer of the custom-house at New York; to the late and present Solicitor of the Treasury; to the Secretary and accounting officers of the Treasury Department, including the late Comptroller of that Department; and, in that part of the report which reviews the conduct of J. Hoyt, the present collector of the customs at the port of New York.

G. W. HOPKINS, *Member of the Committee.*

Now, Mr. Chairman, we find by this report that the gentleman concurs fully in the censure of the committee, passed upon the Secretary of the Treasury; and, that there may be no doubt on the subject, I will read what is said by the committee—page 98:

"The committee will forbear to recapitulate here the extraordinary submissiveness and want of energy that are betrayed by the Secretary of the Treasury, in his tolerance, without known complaint made to the Executive, of the retention and use of the public money collected by the present collector at New York for duties on imports against and under the protests of merchants."

Again, sir, upon the same page, the committee further say:



"It is believed to constitute an *imbecility of administration* on the part of the Secretary that calls for immediate correction, whether regard be had to the honor of the Government or to the security of the public money."

And further, sir, the report says:

"The negligence and failure of the Secretary of the Treasury to discharge his duty as the head of the Treasury Department, charged by law with the superintendence of the collection of the revenue, and his want of a correct appreciation of the beforesaid records in the superintendence of the collection of the public revenues, and the consequent neglect to continue and complete them, are justly regarded as a primary cause of the escape from detection, for so long a period, of the immense defalcations of the late collector at the port of New York."

Here, sir, is a direct assertion made by the gentleman himself, that the Secretary of the Treasury has manifested "extraordinary submissiveness" and "want of energy;" that he has been guilty of "*imbecility of administration*;" and that such conduct requires "*immediate correction*;" and further, sir, that the Secretary, by his "negligence and failure to discharge his duty," is directly responsible for the immense defalcation of Swartwout, amounting to *one million and a quarter* of dollars.

Sir, where is this "imbecile Secretary?" Has he been dismissed by the Executive? Has even an inquiry been made by this House into these grave charges preferred by the committee? No, sir! no! The same negligent, imbecile, criminal Secretary still presides over the Treasury Department. Instead of having been discarded, as the gentleman said he should be, he is the pampered pet of the Executive, and the gentleman from Virginia is *now* as loud in his praise as he was in his denunciation; and he has the assurance to lecture the Opposition for complaining of this gross outrage perpetrated on the character and honor of the Government which he himself assisted in exposing.

But, sir, the committee may check the expression of astonishment which at this time seems so sensibly to pervade it. I have but commenced with the gentleman's *consistency*.

On page 41 of the report I find the following charges made by the gentleman against the late naval officer of the custom-house, New York, (Enos T. Throop:)

"From the preceding testimony, the committee report as established facts:

"1. That the late naval officer at the port of New York, throughout the term of his service, from 1829 to 1833, wholly disregarded the requirements of the law prescribing the duties of his office."

"2. That said naval officer, for the same period, wholly disregarded the instructions of the Comptroller of the Treasury, of November 10, 1821."

"3. That said naval officer, by so disregarding the requirements of law and the instructions of the Treasury Department, culpably neglected to keep the accounts and records appertaining to his office, and thereby rendered the office nugatory as a check upon the accounts of the collector."

"4. That if the duties of said naval officer, as authorized and directed by existing laws, had been executed with proper care and vigilance, they would have rendered it impracticable for any fraud or error in any of the accounts of the collector of said port to escape immediate detection."

"5. That the culpable disregard of the plain requirements of law and of Treasury instructions prescribing the duties of naval officers, by said naval officer, and his continued neglect of official duty, are a primary cause of the immense defalcations of the late collector at New York."

Here, sir, is a charge made against this officer by the gentleman from Virginia. Where, sir, is this same Enos T. Throop? Has he been dismissed from the service of the country? No, sir! This man, who was proved to be incompetent to act as "*naval officer*," instead of being immediately discharged, as he would have been by any honest Executive, has been sent as Chargé to Naples. Unfit to discharge the duty of a subordinate in a custom-house, he is fully qualified to serve as a minister of this great nation at a foreign Court. And the gentleman from Virginia, who so recently demanded his dismissal, lauds the Executive, and vows that this is a most virtuous and pure Administration, and tauntingly sneers at us as a fault-finding Opposition.

Again, sir: on page 105, the Committee of Investigation, after citing repeated instances of neglect in the Solicitor of the Treasury to discharge his duty, report:

"1st. That William M. Price, as district attorney, is a *defaulter* to the Government in a large amount."

"2d. That his defalcations are attributable to the notorious irresponsibility and want of character of said Price at the periods of his appointment and reappointment, and during his entire terms of office; *and to the continued neglect of the proper and efficient discharge of duties at the office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, by the late and present incumbents of that office.*"

Again, I ask the gentleman from Virginia has this officer been dismissed from the service of the State? Has the Executive discharged that duty, which the gentleman deemed so imperative when he signed his report? No, sir. This man who neglected his duty, violated his oath of office, and permitted an immense defalcation, has been sent as Chargé d'affaires to Belgium? Neglect of duty is now the sure road to preferment. Let a man manifest palpable incompetency as Solicitor of the Treasury, and he is immediately made a foreign minister. I, sir, will not attempt to express my astonishment at the course pursued by the gentleman from Virginia. He proves that Mr. Van Buren has violated every trust reposed in him by the people, not only by continuing unfaithful men in office, but by *promoting* them for their misconduct. He then, most unexpectedly, becomes his champion and eulogist, and petulantly complains that we are over-nice in our demands for correct Government.

Page 140, the gentleman is loud in his denunciations of Mr. Hoyt, collector at New York; thinks his conduct unjustifiable; and yet, sir, Mr. Hoyt is still collector; and the gentleman now preaches to us *passive obedience*. Page 70, we find the committee saying that,

"From the preceding evidence the committee report the following fact as established:

"That the late Comptroller of the Treasury, George Wolf, Esq., now collector of the port of Philadelphia,



was guilty, while in said office of Comptroller, of culpable disregard of law and neglect of duty, both in regard to the bonds of collectors filed in his office, and the records thereof required by law; and in settling and certifying to the Register the accounts of Samuel Swartwout, late collector, without having transmitted to him the vouchers therefor required by positive injunction of law."

I will tread lightly here, sir. This officer is now no more. But, sir, after this downright charge of "culpable disregard of law," made by the gentleman from Virginia, this officer, who had neglected his duty and violated all law, was appointed collector of customs at Philadelphia. Unfit to be Comptroller, he was fully qualified to superintend some hundreds of officers, and to receive millions of the public money annually.

Page 41. The First Auditor is denounced as negligent and incompetent. Yet now, not a word of complaint from the gentleman from Virginia; and all this "criminal neglect and official negligence," which in 1839 appeared to the gentleman so unjustifiable, so monstrous, is, in 1840, quite innocent, very excusable, and entirely unworthy of serious consideration. This is, indeed, a change of opinion. *Last year*, to denounce the Administration, sub-Treasury and all: *this year*, to support it warmly, and its darling sub-Treasury too. I know, sir, that with some politicians it becomes *necessary* to alter their opinions; and this change of the gentleman recalls to my recollection a passage I once read in one of Bulwer's works, in which the politic courtier finds it *necessary* to change his opinions in order to keep pace with the shifting policy of the Court.

"Well! I have decided on my change of life," said the lawyer, with a slight sigh.

"So have I on my *change of opinion*," chimed in the Earl. "I will tell you what opinions seem to me like"—

"What?" said Brandon.

"Trees!" answered Mauleverer, quaintly; "if they can be made serviceable by standing, don't part with a stick; but when they are of that growth that sells well, or whenever they shut out a *fine prospect*, cut them down and pack them off by all manner of means."

I, Mr. Chairman, shall not inquire as to the causes which led the gentleman from Virginia to this sudden, startling, and mysterious change in his political opinions. I am not even inquisitive or interested enough to inquire whether his former opinions shut out a *fine prospect*. It is sufficient for me to know that he has cut them all down. The reason is with himself. But, sir, he will excuse me when I say, that I think it in bad taste for him to criticise too narrowly the ground we tread, when he so recently taught us that it was our duty to walk it fearlessly, as being the path of rectitude and honor. When the gentleman shall favor us with a clew to the labyrinth, the mazes of which he is threading, and shall give us something like convincing proof that he pursues its tortuous windings, not from personal aggrandizement or ambitious aspirations, then, sir, we may again, with indulgent eye, look upon his course. Until then, sir, the gentleman must excuse us if we look suspiciously on his advice, and distrustingly upon the position he has assumed. I will, Mr. Chairman, give one other extract from the report of the committee of which the gentleman was a zealous member, and then leave it to the gentleman to reconcile the opinions then expressed with his present course.

"But, the important results which have been attained, notwithstanding the disadvantages adverted to, cannot fail to inspire the country with a confident hope that the high obligation which will rest upon the successors of the present Congress in the legislative councils of the nation, to resume and complete the great work of investigation and reform of the alarming condition and abuses of the Executive Departments of the Government, from the highest to the lowest, and from the nearest to the remotest functionaries, will secure the prompt and efficient attention which its magnitude demands.

"Guided solely by the character of the developments which the investigation imposed upon them by the House has elicited, the committee cannot resist the conviction, that at no period in the history of the Federal Government has there been deeper or better founded cause than exists at the present moment for every patriot heart to desire a prompt consummation of that signal '*task of reform*' which public sentiment, many years since, inscribed on the list of Executive duties in characters too legible to be overlooked, requiring, 'particularly, the correction of those abuses that have brought the patronage of the Federal Government into conflict with the freedom of elections, and the counteraction of those causes which have disturbed the rightful course of appointment, and have placed or continued power in UNFAITHFUL OR INCOMPETENT HANDS.'"

We here read of the OBLIGATION which rests upon this Congress "*to resume and complete the great work of investigation, reform of the alarming condition and abuses of the Executive Departments of the Government*," and yet, sir, the gentleman has not only neglected to "resume and complete" the work he commenced, but has joined the party which permitted and countenanced these abuses, and now refuses to grant investigation. We also read, "*that at no period in the history of the Federal Government*" has there existed so much necessity for every patriot heart to rally to the rescue of the country; and yet, sir, the gentleman, instead of fighting under our glorious and bright banner of reform, has rallied under the black piratical flag of Van Burenism. Sir, said Mr. PROFFER, I take no pleasure in criticising the course of any gentleman; I know the fallibility of human nature. I regret being compelled to show to my fellow-citizens the corruptions of their Government. I regret that this corruption exists. I am sorry that the necessity is forced upon me to take any thing like a prominent position in denouncing the conduct of the Administration. I know that a faithful discharge of duty will draw down the execrations and base calumnies of the Administration presses—our motives will be impugned; public course misrepresented; private character assailed; "life's life lied away." But, sir, I, for one, will pursue my course with the same defying spirit which animated the poet when he exclaimed—



"As little as the moon stops for the baying  
Of wolves, will the bright muse withdraw one ray  
From out her skies. *Then howl your idle wrath!*  
While she still silvers o'er your gloomy path."

[Mr. PROFFER then proceeded to defend General Harrison from the charges and insinuations made against him by Mr. HOPKINS, both in his speech and in his letter to Colonel Piper. Mr. P. read extracts from the speeches of General Harrison when in Congress, from his published letters. He referred to his votes to disprove the statements of Mr. HOPKINS. This part of Mr. P.'s speech will be published at some future day.]







